ROUTING NETWORKS FOR USE WITH WATERMARK SYSTEMS

Abstract of the Disclosure

A watermark embedded in a content (e.g., a printed document, digital audio, etc.)

5   includes data that associates the content with a remote store of related data. For example, an image watermark may contain an index value that identifies a database record specifying (a) the owner's name; (b) contact information; (c) license terms and conditions, (d) copyright date, (e) whether adult content is depicted, etc., etc. Or a magazine advertisement may contain an index value that identifies a database record

10   specifying a related URL. Sometimes there are several back-and-forth exchanges between the decoding device and the database. To speed response time, it is desirable that this traffic be exchanged with a database that is located close – in network proximity – to the device that decodes the watermark. In one embodiment this is accomplished by first querying a master database with the zip code, or other identifier, of the decoding

15   device. The first database then responds by identifying a second, nearby database with which further traffic should be exchanged.